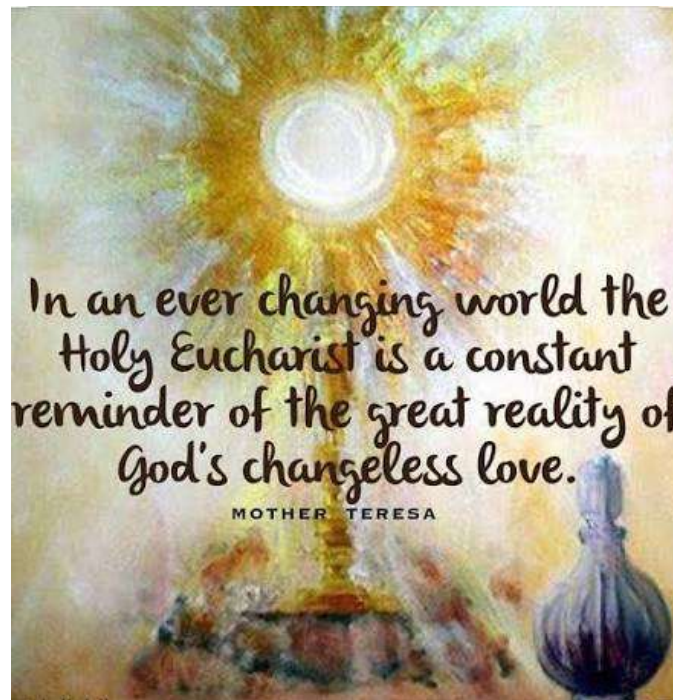


The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield

United Church of Christ



September 6, 2026; 10 a.m.

REFLECT

"Jesus embodied God's good news not only in the words he said, but in the way he lived his life. He ate with ordinary, irreligious, 'unworthy' people, and he included among his followers the kind of people a religious teacher wasn't supposed to associate with—such as women and tax collectors. He stood up for these 'sinful' people against the religious authorities of the day, and finally, he even died to preserve the integrity of his good news."

—L. William Countryman, in *Good News of Jesus*—

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
ORDER OF WORSHIP

*Words in **bold** are to be spoken in unison.*

 *Please stand as you are able.*

Congregational Announcements

Pastoral Greeting

Prelude and Candle Lighting

Stephen Page

A Call To Break Bread Together in Community

Pat Jackman

Leader: Christ is the bread of life.

**All: We have nourished ourselves many times on God's word, yet
we are hungry again.**

Leader: Come, listen to God's promise.

All: Come, feast at God's table.

Leader: May breaking bread together renew our courage and satisfy our longings.

All: Let us worship God, who loves us beyond measure.

 An Opening Hymn

"As We Gather at Your Table"

#695

A Reading from the New Testament

I John 4:7-12

A Responsive Reflection on Coming to the Table of Christ

Pastor: Taste and see how gracious the Christ is, Taste and see the wonder of life; Take the bread, the body of Jesus, Break the bread, the flesh of the world; Taste and see the wonder of life.

All: Taste and see how gracious the Christ is, Taste and see the wonder of life; Take the wine, the life-blood of Jesus, Pour the wine, the pain of the world; Taste and see the wonder of life.

Leader: Taste and see how gracious the Christ is, Taste and see the wonder of life; Walk the earth with bare-footed reverence, Smell the soil, the rain and the sea; Feed your heart with wonder-filled life.

All: Taste and see how gracious the Christ is, Taste and see the wonder of life; Hear the sound of children's bright laughter, Cries of pain and tears of the poor; Then let silence nurture your heart.

Pastor: Taste and see how gracious the Christ is, Taste and see the wonder of life; Through each form, each texture and color, Line and hue, the light and the shade; Taste and see the wonder of life.

All: Taste and see how gracious the Christ is, Taste and see the wonder of life; Drink the wine of love's costly service, Celebrate Life's Eucharist now; Taste and share Christ's Body and Blood.

A Reading from the Gospel

John 13: 1, 31-35

Reader: May God bless our hearing and understanding of this
reading from our sacred texts.

All: Word of God, Word of Life, Thanks be to God

Prayers of the People Sharing Concerns, Joys ~ Pastoral Prayer ~ Lord's Prayer~

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Call to Offering and Offertory Music

(Offering plates are in the front and rear of the sanctuary for your gifts; you may place them in the plates during the music)

 **A Doxology**

Tune: # 34 (Old 100th)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

Youth Message

Music for Reflection and Inspiration

Stephen Page

Sermon

"Living Eucharistically"

Rev. Doug

Williamson

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

(Without exception, in our community of faith, all are welcome to commune at God's table. Our bread is gluten free, our juice non-alcoholic and unsweetened.)

A CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: For the power of love in human life and history, we give thanks and praise.

All: Long ago our ancestors knew love's power and they became the tellers of love's tale. Love bound them in covenant, teaching them to live in community with compassion and concern for the poorest among them.

Pastor: Yet centuries of domination and violence shaped a different kind of community based on selfishness and inequality.

All: In the struggle against oppression, Jesus became the face of love, showing us the way to abundant life. In word and deed, he announced love's new reign of justice, reconciliation, and peace. Filled with the courage and passion of love's spirit, he gave his life to challenge the unjust systems of this world.

Pastor: *On the night of his betrayal and arrest, as he shared a meal with his friends, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his followers, saying: "Share this bread among you; this is my body which will be broken for justice. Do this to remember me."* Pastor: *When supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Share this wine among you; this is my blood which will be shed for liberation. Do this to remember me."*

All: God of love, spirit of compassion, bless us and this bread and wine. May this meal be food and drink for our journey—renewing, sustaining, and making us whole.

Pastor: The gifts of God, for the people of God: The bread of life – a symbol of abundance for all. The poured-out wine – a symbol of sacrificial living. When we eat this bread and drink from this cup we experience again the presence of Jesus in our midst.

[Bread served; we partake together; cups served; we partake together.]

Pastor: Let us join together in prayer:

All: Eternal, loving God, we thank you for this simple common meal that brings the spirit and reality of Christ into our hearts, and brings us closer to you. May our lives be inspired by your love, and may your love touch others through us. Amen.



A Closing Hymn “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” **#698**



Benediction (after which, please be seated for the postlude)

Postlude



Our Covenant of Welcome

We, the members of the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, are a people of faith, following Jesus and sharing God's abundant love, believing each of us is created in God's image.

We seek to demonstrate God's love through respect and care for one another. We celebrate and learn from differences in race, culture, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, economic and political background, and physical and cognitive challenges. We welcome those who have no church home, need strength, want to follow Christ, or are seekers in their spiritual lives. All are invited to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry and mission of this church as we strive to grow in a safe and nurturing community of faith. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Welcome members, friends, and visitors to our service this morning! If you are a guest with us, we invite you to sign our guest register and/or fill out a visitor card. Activity bags are available in the back of the sanctuary for children who are with us in worship.

Prayer Requests

Would you like to ask for prayers for someone? You may write your request in the red prayer book on the table located in the back of the sanctuary. A deacon will share them with the pastor. Please see a deacon with any questions.

First Congregational Church of West Brookfield UCC

An Open and Affirming Church

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